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## Letter dated 1 December 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the outcome document of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference held on 26 and 27 November 2016 in Ashgabat (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19.

(*Signed*) Rovshen **Annaberdiyev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

16-21482 (E) 081216

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## Annex to the letter dated 1 December 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

## Ashgabat statement on commitments and Policy Recommendations of the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport

1. As an integral part of the United Nations commitment and strategy to advance sustainable development and combat climate change, the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened the first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, held in Ashgabat on 26 and 27 November 2016.

2. The Conference — an initiative welcomed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 70/197, which was initiated by Turkmenistan and adopted unanimously by the Member States — builds on the outcomes of earlier intergovernmental deliberations, including "The future we want", the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, the Vienna Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.

3. The Conference brought together important stakeholders from Governments, the United Nations system, multilateral development banks, the business sector and civil society in a series of forward-looking and action-oriented dialogues that emphasized the enabling power of sustainable transport and its multiple roles in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The Conference addressed all modes of transport — road, rail, aviation, ferry and maritime, including both passengers and freight — and accorded priority attention to the concerns of developing countries, particularly those of Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

5. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the role of sustainable transport in connecting people and communities to jobs, schools and health care and in the delivery of goods and services to rural and urban communities, thus providing all with equal opportunities and leaving no one behind.

6. Deliberations at both plenary and thematic sessions demonstrated that sustainable transport drives inclusive growth and access to local, regional and global markets, and powers the growth of trade and tourism. The transport sector also makes a significant contribution to national gross domestic product, employment and local and national revenues.

7. For transport systems to fully fulfil their multiple enabling functions in advancing sustainable development, all stakeholders need to work together to ensure the availability of safe, universally accessible, reliable, secure, affordable, fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly, low-carbon and climate-resilient transport services, systems, infrastructure and operations, with due attention to local, national and regional circumstances.

8. While there are various transport challenges facing the world today, including safety and security challenges, there are also tremendous opportunities to rethink the current, largely unsustainable, transport policies and to fast-track best practices to a new paradigm of sustainable transport in particular in developing countries.

9. All stakeholders need to work together to put in place integrated multimodal transport and transit systems and corridors that optimize the comparative advantages of each mode of transport to achieve sustainable transport of passengers and freight within and between countries, including through regional and subregional connectivity, integration, and harmonization of transport systems and frameworks. In this regard, there was recognition of the need to revive the ancient Silk Road with modern technology and advanced management of transit corridors. The "One Belt, One Road" initiative was welcomed.

10. In developing multimodal transport systems, it is necessary to take into account road, rail, maritime, ferry and air transport, as well as non-motorized transport such as cycling and walking, and emphasis should be placed on low-carbon-based modes of transport and an increased reliance on interconnected transport networks, including public transport systems, for seamless and "door-to-door" mobility and connectivity of people and goods.

11. In this regard, there is a need to assist developing countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, to "leapfrog" to sustainable transport, including in strengthening policy planning, standard-setting and regulatory frameworks.

12. Participants further reaffirmed the commitment to support efforts to provide communities in rural areas in developing countries with access to major roads, rail lines and public transport options that enable access to economic and social activities and opportunities in cities and towns and that unleash productivity and competitiveness of rural entrepreneurs and smallholder farmers. Addressing these circumstances will be among the essential steps needed to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its promise to "leave no one behind".

13. Participants also underlined the commitment to expand the public transport sector, which requires a shift that takes into account multimodal transport systems, cooperation among stakeholders and transport authorities, policy integration, digital mobility, capacity-building and a redirection of finance.

14. Participants further reaffirmed the commitment to increasing investment in hard and soft infrastructure development and in multimodal transport in the least developed countries, including in railways, roads, waterways, airports, warehouses, port facilities and logistics services, and to supporting partnerships designed to strengthen infrastructure building in these countries.

15. Also highlighted was the importance of addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries, inter alia, by establishing and promoting efficient transit transport systems that link them to international markets, by developing, upgrading and maintaining all modes of transit transport infrastructure, by promoting and harmonizing an enabling environment, regulatory frameworks and institutional arrangements for transit, and by forging genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels.

16. Participants reaffirmed the commitment to enhancing inter-island connectivity and linking the economies of small island developing States to regional markets and global supply chains, including by integrating them into existing and emerging maritime and multimodal transport and economic corridors, and to encouraging sustainable transport initiatives in the context of the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework. The importance of effective climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction for critical coastal transport infrastructure in small island developing States was highlighted, as was the related urgent need for capacity-building and financing.

17. Participants re-emphasized the need to promote harmonization, simplification and standardization of rules and documentation, including the full and effective implementation of international conventions on transport and transit as well as bilateral, subregional and regional agreements. The benefits of harmonized international regulatory frameworks for transit cooperation include, among others, more efficient and effective border and customs controls, simplified and standardized procedures and enhanced cooperation, which will lead to faster, cheaper and more reliable cross-border trade and transport, especially for landlocked developing countries.

18. Participants further resolved to renew efforts to reshape transport networks and planning by optimizing operations through smart hubs, organizing routes and schedules to reduce empty mileage, improving land-use planning, and harmonizing regulatory frameworks across the transport sector.

19. Bearing in mind that close to a quarter of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions come from transport and that these emissions are projected to grow substantially in the years to come, participants reaffirmed their commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector and to accelerating progress in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

20. Given the potential for climate-related damage, disruption and delay across closely interconnected global supply chains, participants resolved to take multi-pronged strategies to accelerate transition to low-carbon energy sources and technologies, increase investments in climate-resilient transport infrastructure, and encourage uptake of new and innovative technologies, including information and communication technology-based solutions, in support of intelligent multimodal transport systems.

21. Participants acknowledged the decision of the thirty-ninth session of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Assembly to implement a global market-based measure to address the increase in total carbon dioxide emissions from international civil aviation above 2020 levels, taking into account special circumstances and respective capabilities of States.

22. Participants noted that international maritime transport plays an essential role in facilitation of world trade and that the International Maritime Organization, following the adoption of mandatory energy efficiency measures for ships in July 2011, which entered into force on 1 January 2013, is also developing a strategy to consider further measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships, including implementation schedule.

23. It was also highlighted that air pollution caused by transportation is a growing public health risk, contributing to several millions of premature deaths, predominantly in developing countries. There is a need to improve vehicle and propulsion technology, encourage electric mobility, enhance end-use fuel efficiency in transport, improve and upgrade public transportation, reduce road congestion, encourage vehicle sharing and integrated charging systems, and shift to more compact city planning. In addition, it was emphasized that renewed efforts should be made to support industries in energy-efficient and low-emissions vehicle manufacturing.

24. Participants underscored concerns over traffic deaths and injuries, which have overwhelming effects on families and livelihoods. Every year around 1.25 million people are killed, mostly in developing countries, and between 20 and 50 million are seriously injured on the world's roads. It is imperative that the international community redouble efforts to reach the target in the Sustainable Development Goals of halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020 and to make renewed efforts to implement the relevant United Nations conventions on road safety. In this regard, participants also highlighted the need for adequate pedestrian and public spaces in cities and the importance of improving street design to ensure road safety and integration with mass-transit modes.

25. It was emphasized that public transport services and infrastructure were critical to enable the mobility of people and goods, in particular taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups (women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants). This is particularly important for cities, because by 2050 the share of the world population living in cities is expected to rise to about 67 per cent, with much of the urbanization happening in developing countries. Sustainable public transport provides enormous benefits for cities, reducing air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, while contributing to the economic vitality of cities.

26. Governments, local authorities, business and civil society must work together to launch public-private partnerships to develop innovative, smart, forward-looking and people-centred sustainable transport systems. In this regard, a representative of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport presented a summary of the discussion at the Ashgabat Transport Business Forum and its outcome document.

27. Mobilizing finance for sustainable transport will be an enormous challenge, especially given the strain on public finances that exists in many countries. In this context, participants reaffirmed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and underscored the vital role of public finance, both domestic and international, in meeting sustainable transport needs and in catalysing all sources of finance, including traditional official development assistance, domestic resource mobilization, direct private investment and a wide array of partnership models, including public-private partnerships.

28. Participants further stressed the need to promote the integration of science, technology and innovation into sustainable transport systems by tapping into technological opportunities in the decades to come to bring about fundamental, transformative changes to transport systems, including energy efficiency

technologies as well as the information and communication technologies and called for strengthening capacity-building support to developing countries.

29. Participants welcomed stakeholders who have developed and launched sustainable transport initiatives, and called on all stakeholders to continue to seek collaborative partnerships for new, innovative, sustainable transport paradigms. The United Nations Secretariat will organize effective follow-up on the implementation of these initiatives.

30. Participants emphasized the need for improved reporting and data collection systems to ensure effective implementation of low-carbon, sustainable and resilient transport systems. Adequate and quality data is key for setting baselines and benchmarks as well as for measuring performance and tracking and monitoring progress.

31. It was also emphasized that States that have not yet done so should consider acceding to or ratifying United Nations legal instruments relating to transport. Member States and other relevant stakeholders are also encouraged to further strengthen their participation in United Nations intergovernmental deliberations on sustainable transport, including through specialized platforms convened by the United Nations system.

32. Participants expressed appreciation for the contributions of the High-level Advisory Group of the Secretary-General on Sustainable Transport. The United Nations system entities resolved to strengthen their follow-up networks and inter-agency cooperation, including monitoring and evaluation arrangements, for sustainable transport initiatives launched in the lead-up to and during the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, linking tracking frameworks, targets and indicators, where appropriate, to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. Participants expressed profound gratitude to the President, Government and people of Turkmenistan for their warm hospitality and generous support for the preparation and organization of the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport. They reiterated their commitment to continuing to working on sustainable transport issues and keep them high on the global sustainable development agenda.